DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 148 355 IR 005 460

AUTHOR Buel, Sue; Hosford, Charles
TITLE Interpersonal Communications Workshop.
INSTITUTION Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, Oreg.
PUB DATE Jul 72
NOTE 83p.; Several pages have marginal legibility.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$4.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication Skills; Instructional Materials; *Intercommunication; *Interpersonal Competence; *Interpersonal Relationship; Librarians; Professional Continuing Education; *Skill Development; Workshops

ABSTRACT

The major purpose of an interpersonal communications workshop is to provide participants the opportunity to acquire knowledge and practice skills in face-to-face communication, individual communicating style, group and organizational factors which affect communication, and continued improvement of individual communication skills. The exercises in this document are designed for use by library personnel in a series of theory and practice sessions on interpersonal communications. Topics include: (1) the degree of congruence between a person's intentions and the effect produced, (2) paraphrasing, (3) handling misunderstandings, (4) nonverbal behavior, (5) behavior description, (6) defensive communication, (7) description of feelings, (8) emotional states, (9) feedback, (10) interpersonal effect, (11) matching behavior, (12) norms, (13) group processes, (14) goals, and (15) power and influence. (KP)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED148355

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP

Sue Buel
Charles Hosford

Continuing Education Program for Library Personnel
Dr. Peter Hiatt, Director

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
P.O. Drawer P, Boulder, Colorado 80302

Materials selected from
Interpersonal Communications

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Lindsay Building, 710 S.W. Second Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97204

IR005 460

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

©Copyright 1972 by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Lindsay Building/710 S. W. Second Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97204

July 1972

Published by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, a private nonprofit corporation supported in part as a regional educational laboratory by funds from the United States Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the Office of Education should be inferred.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	v
INTRODUCTION TO INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS	1
THE INTERPERSONAL GAP	3
PARAPHRASING A Basic Communication Skill for Improving Interpersonal Relationships	11
HANDLING MISUNDERSTANDINGS	15
WHEN TO USE A SKILL LIKE PARAPHRASING	19
NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR	20
BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION A Basic Communication Skill for Improving Interpersonal Relationships	23
DEFENSIVE COMMUNICATION	26
DESCRIPTION OF FEELINGS A Basic Communication Skill for Improving Interpersonal Relationships	37
HOW EMOTIONAL STATES EXPRESS THEMSELVES	38
THE CONCEPT OF FEEDBACK	43
THE INTERPERSONAL EFFECT OF VARIOUS RESPONSES	48
EMOTIONS AS PROBLEMS	50
MATCHING BEHAVIOR	52
WHAT IS A NORM?	54
FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION PATTERNS	57
WHAT TO OBSERVE IN A GROUP	59
BION'S CATEGORIES	64
SETTING GOALS FOR IMPROVEMENT	65
DEVELOPING SUPPORT FOR CONTINUOUS LEARNING	67
POWER AND INFLUENCE	68
THE HELPING RELATIONSHIP AND INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES	70
BLOCKING AND FACILITATING COMMUNICATION	75

PREFACE

Purposes and Objectives of the Workshop

The major purpose of an interpersonal communications workshop is to provide participants the opportunity to acquire knowledge and to practice skills related to:

Face-to-face communication

One's own unique style of communicating

Group and organizational factors which affect that communication

Continued improvement of one's communication skills

Innovations and changes in library functions and roles increased the need for collaboration at all levels. In the traditional concept of libraries, many librarians have carried out their roles in relative isolation. Now, in a search for change and relevance, educators in general and librarians specifically are concerned that effective use of library resources not be curtailed due to issues of influence, polarized conflict and ineffective communication. Increased interpersonal communications skills of library personnel will reduce at least one hindrance to local improvement efforts.

The theory and practice sessions are designed to be used in sequence and have a cumulative effect. Later sessions depend upon the skills gained and data generated in previous activities; so attendance throughout the workshop is essential. The sequence of activities will provide three kinds of learning. Participants will become more clear concerning things to know about interpersonal communications. He practices alternative ways to do things in interpersonal communications, and he becomes able to recognize and develop his own personal style of communicating with others.

Sue Ellen Buel v

INTRODUCTION TO INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

This series of exercises presents some basic things to know about interpersonal communications. It is assumed you may already be somewhat familiar with many of these things. Even though we are all involved in these things when we communicate with others, most of us don't give them much attention. These exercises attempt to bring them more clearly into awareness so that you, as an individual, can work at improving your skills in communicating.

Improving skills of communicating goes beyond simply becoming more clear about what you know. Therefore, each exercise includes opportunities to practice the behaviors which are described, to learn ways to recognize these behaviors, and to gain "feedback" from your partners about the ways you use these behaviors. The emphasis of these exercises is on learning to communicate more effectively as opposed to knowing about communication.

Many skills in interpersonal communications involve the personal style of the individual. For example, paraphrasing involves stating what you heard someone say, then checking with him to be sure you understand what he meant by it. The exact behavior you use to do this checking will depend on your personal style. The important questions are whether you are clear about the ways you communicate and whether you are aware of the impact of your personal style of communicating.

In short, this series of exercises attempts to provide three kinds of opportunity: (1) To become more clear about things you <u>know</u> about

interpersonal communications; (2) To practice specific skills of interpersonal communication; (3) To recognize more clearly your personal style of interpersonal communications.

THE INTERPERSONAL GAP

John L. Wallen

You cannot have your own way all the time. Your best intentions will sometimes end in disaster, while, at other times, you will receive credit for desirable outcomes you didn't intend. In short, what you accomplish is not always what you hoped.

The most basic and recurring problem in social life is the relation between what you intend and the effect of your actions on others. The key terms we use in attempting to make sense of interpersonal relations are "intentions", "actions" and "effect". "Interpersonal gap" refers to the degree of congruence between one person's intentions and the effect produced in the other. If the effect is what was intended, the gap has been bridged. If the effect is the opposite of what was intended, the gap has become greater.

Let us look more closely at the three terms.

The word "intentions" means the wishes, wants, hopes, desires, fears that give rise to actions. Underlying motives of which you may be unaware are not being referred to.

It is a fact that people may say after an action has produced some result, "That wasn't what I meant to do. That outcome wasn't what I intended." Or, "Yes, that's what I hoped would happen." We look at the social outcome and decide whether it is what we intended. Apparently, we can compare what we wished to happen with the outcome and determine whether they match.

Here are some examples of interpersonal intentions.

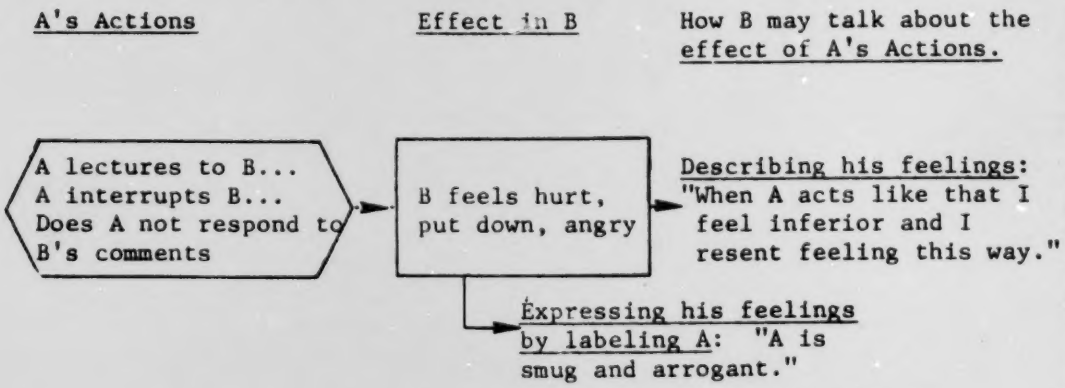
"I want him to like me."
"I want him to obey me."
"I want him to realize that I know a great deal about this subject."
"I don't want her to know that I am angry with her."
"I don't want to talk with him."
"I wish he would tell me what to do."

Intentions may also be mixed.

> "I want him to know I like him, but I don't want to be embarrassed."
> "I want him to tell me I'm doing a good job, but I don't want to ask for it."
> "I would like him to know how angry it makes me when he does that, but I don't want to lose his friendship."

Intentions are private and are known directly only to the one who experiences them. I know my own intentions, but I must infer yours. You know your own intentions, but you must infer mine.

"Effect" refers to a person's inner response to the actions of another. We may describe the other's effect by openly stating what feelings are aroused by his actions. However, we are often unaware of our feelings as feelings. When this happens our feelings influence how we see the other and we label him or his actions in a way that expresses our feelings even though we may be unaware of them.


A's Actions
Effect in B
How B may talk about the effect of A's Actions.
A lectures to B...
A interrupts B...
Does A not respond to B's comments
B feels hurt, put down, angry
Describing his feelings: "When A acts like that I feel inferior and I resent feeling this way."
Expressing his feelings by labeling A: "A is smug and arrogant."

Here are some other examples showing how the same effect may be talked about as a description of one's own feeling or by labeling the other as an indirect way of expressing one's feeling.

E → Describing feelings: "What he did makes me feel angry with him."

E → Expressing feelings by labeling other: "He's self-centered. He wanted to hurt me."

E → Describing feelings: "What he just did makes me feel closer and more friendly towards him."

E → Expressing feelings by labeling other: "He's certainly a warm, understanding person."

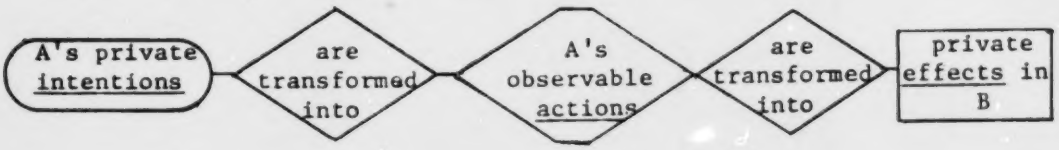
E → Describing feelings: "When he acts like that I feel embarrassed and ill-at-ease."

E → Expressing feelings by labeling other: "He's crude and disgusting."

In contrast to interpersonal intentions and effects which are private, actions are public and observable. They may be verbal ("good morning!") or nonverbal (looking away when passing another), brief (a touch on the shoulder) or extended (taking a person out to dinner).

Interpersonal actions are communicative. They include attempts by the sender to convey a message, <u>whether or not it is received</u>, as well as actions that the receiver responds to as messages, <u>whether or not the sender intended them that way</u>.

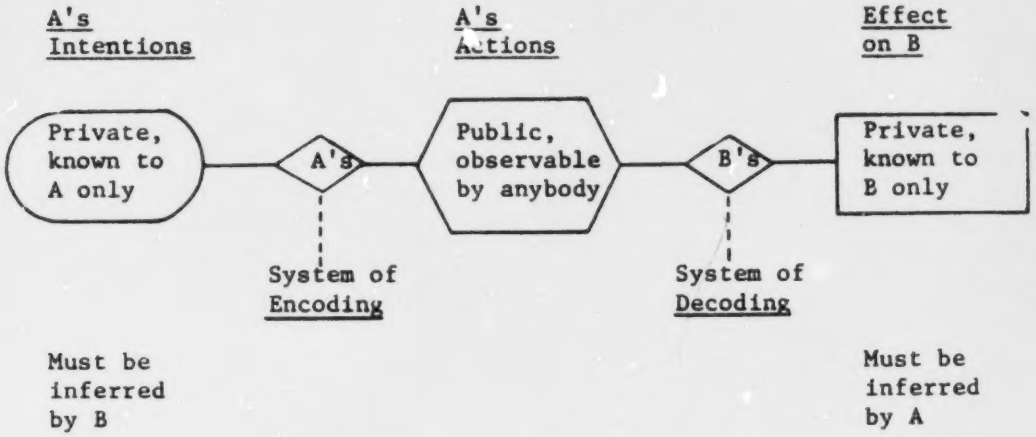
Here is a schematic summary of the interpersonal gap.



The interpersonal gap, thus, contains two transformations. These steps are referred to as coding and decoding operations. A's actions are a coded expression of his inner state. B's inner response is a result of the way he decodes A's actions. If B decodes A's behavior in the same way that A has coded it, A will have produced the effect he intended.

To be specific, let's imagine that I feel warm and friendly toward you. I pat you on the shoulder. The pat, thus, is an action code for my friendly feeling. You decode this, however, as an act of condescension. The effect of my behavior, then, is that you feel put down, inferior and annoyed with me. My system of coding does not match your system of decoding and the interpersonal gap, consequently, is difficult to bridge.

We can now draw a more complete picture of the interpersonal gap as follows.

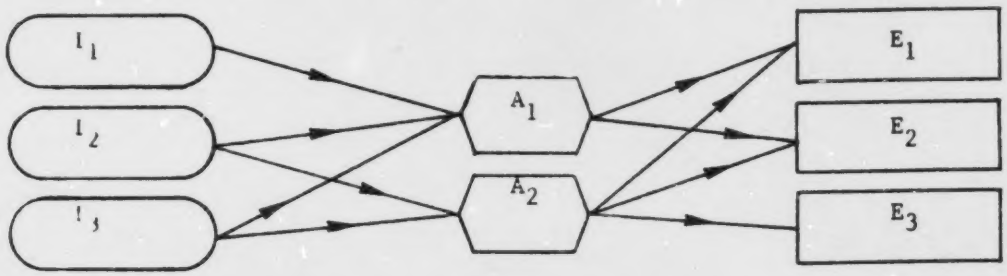


You may be unaware of the ways you code your intentions and decode others' actions. In fact, you may have been unaware that you do. One of the important objectives of this study of interpersonal relations is to help you become aware of the silent assumptions that influence how you code and decode.

If you are aware of your encoding operation, you can accurately describe how you typically act when you feel angry, affectionate, threatened, uneasy, etc.

If you are aware of your method of decoding behavior of others, you can describe accurately the kinds of distortions or misreadings of others you typically make. Some people, for example, respond to gestures of affection as if they were attempts to limit their autonomy. Some respond to offers of help as if they were being put down. Some misread enthusiasm as anger.

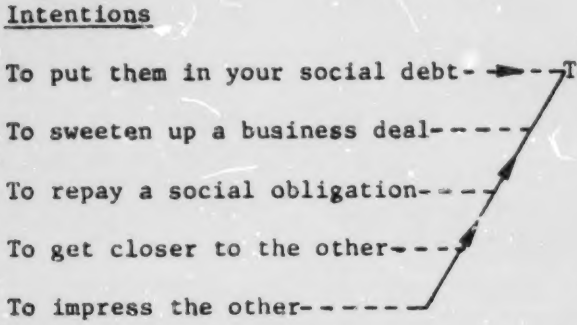
Because different people use different codes, actions have no unique and constant meaning, but are interchangeable. As the diagram below shows, an action may express different intentions, the same intention may give rise to different actions, different actions may produce the same effect, and different effects may be produced by the same kind of action.



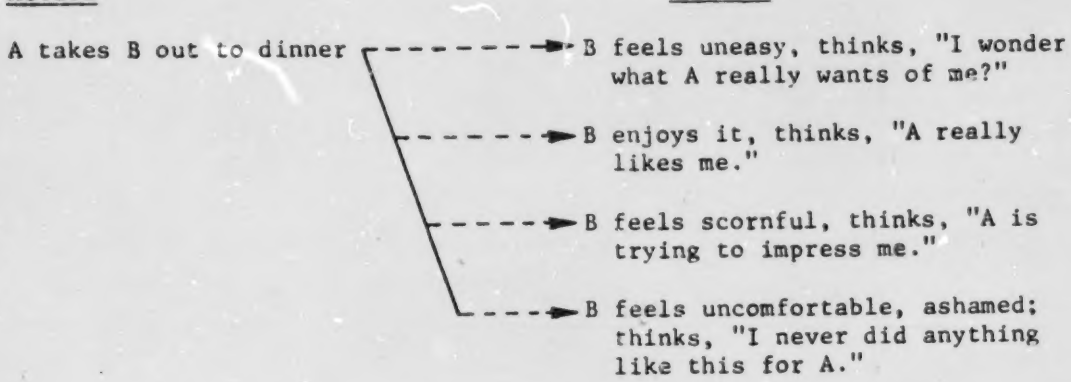
The same intention may be expressed by different actions.

Intention	Actions
To show affection	Take them out to dinner
	Buy them a gift
	Show interest in what they say
	Don't interrupt them when they are busy and preoccupied

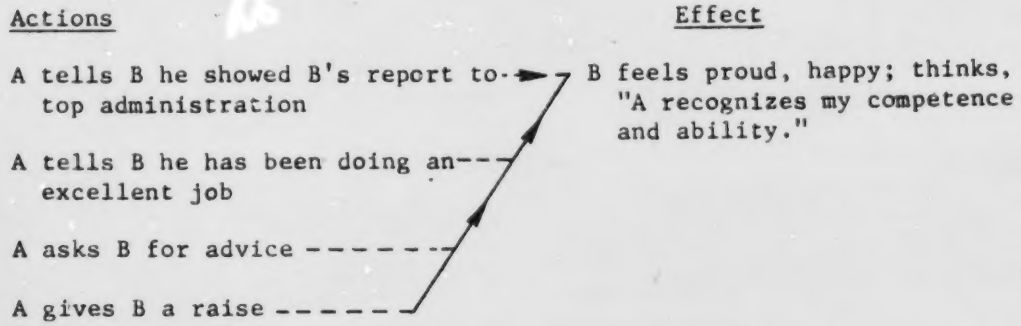
Different intentions may be expressed by the same action.


Intentions
Action
To put them in your social debt-
To sweeten up a business deal-
To repay a social obligation-
To get closer to the other-
To impress the other-
Take them out to dinner

The same action may lead to different effects.


Action
Effects
A takes B out to dinner
B feels uneasy, thinks, "I wonder what A really wants of me?"
B enjoys it, thinks, "A really likes me."
B feels scornful, thinks, "A is trying to impress me."
B feels uncomfortable, ashamed; thinks, "I never did anything like this for A."

Different actions may lead to the same effect.


Actions
Effect
A tells B he showed B's report to top administration
A tells B he has been doing an excellent job
A asks B for advice
A gives B a raise
B feels proud, happy; thinks, "A recognizes my competence and ability."

It should be obvious that when you and I interact, each of us views his own and the other's actions in a different frame of reference. Each of us sees his own actions in the light of his own intentions, but we see

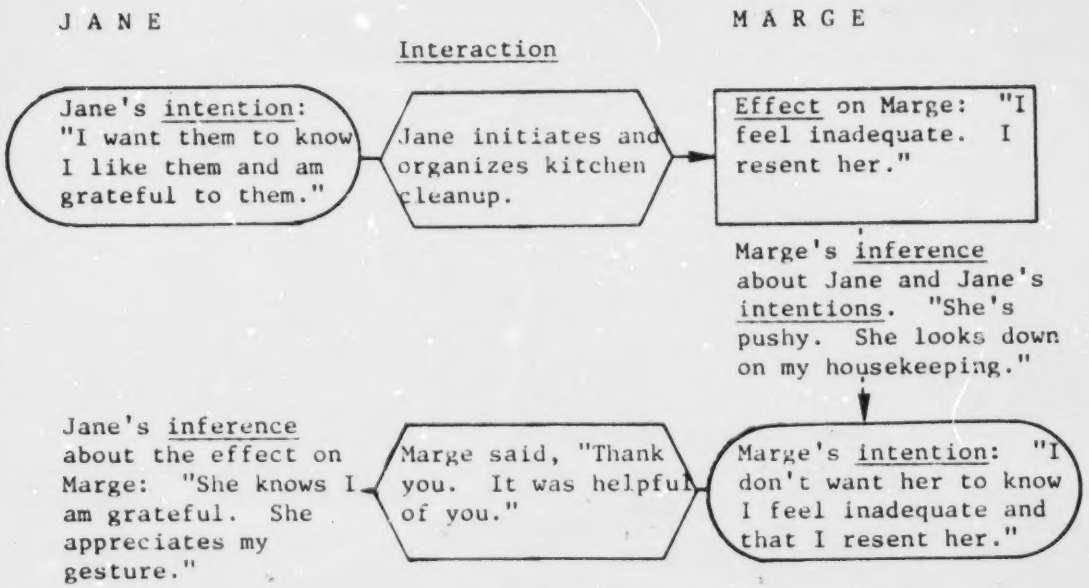
the other's actions in the light of the effect they have on us. This is the principle of partial information--each party to an interaction has different and partial information about the interpersonal gap.

Bridging the interpersonal gap requires that each person understand how the other sees the interaction.

Example:

> Jane hadn't seen Tom Laird since they taught together at Brookwood School. When she found that she would be attending a conference in Tom's city she wrote to ask if she could visit him. Tom and his wife, Marge, whom Jane had never met, invited her to stay with them for the three days of the conference.
>
> After dinner the first night Jane was the one who suggested that they clean up the dishes so they could settle down for an evening of talk. She was feeling warm and friendly to both of the Lairds and so grateful for their hospitality that she wanted to show them in some way. As she began carrying the dishes to the kitchen, Marge and Tom at first protested but when she continued cleaning up they began to help. In the kitchen, Jane took over only allowing Marge and Tom to help in little ways and to tell her where to find or store things.
>
> When they had finished in the kitchen, Jane commented, "There now, that didn't take long and everything's spic and span." Marge responded, "It was very helpful of you. Thank you."
>
> When Tom and Marge were preparing for bed later that evening, Tom was startled to hear Marge burst out with, "I was so humiliated. I just resent her so much I can hardly stand it."
>
> "You mean Jane? What did she do that upset you so?"
>
> "The way she took over. She's certainly a pushy, dominating person. To come into my home as a visitor and then the moment dinner is over organize the whole cleanup. It's easy to tell that she thinks I'm not a very good housekeeper. At first I felt inadequate and then I felt angry. I'll keep house any way I like. Who is she to show me up? After all she's a guest and you'd think she'd be grateful for our putting her up."
>
> "Aw, c'mon, Marge, Jane was just trying to be helpful."
>
> "Well, it wasn't helpful. It was humiliating. It's going to be hard for me to be nice to her for three days."

The following is a diagram of the interpersonal gap for the interaction between Jane and Marge.


J A N E
Interaction
M A R G E
Jane's intention: "I want them to know I like them and am grateful to them."
Jane initiates and organizes kitchen cleanup.
Effect on Marge: "I feel inadequate. I resent her."
Marge's inference about Jane and Jane's intentions. "She's pushy. She looks down on my housekeeping."
Marge's intention: "I don't want her to know I feel inadequate and that I resent her."
Marge said, "Thank you. It was helpful of you."
Jane's inference about the effect on Marge: "She knows I am grateful. She appreciates my gesture."

Note the gap between Jane's intention and Marge's inference about Jane's intention. They do not match. In fact, they are almost opposites.

Note the gap between the effect of Jane's action on Marge and Jane's inference about the effect on Marge. Again they are almost opposite.

However, within each person the situation is balanced. Jane's intention is congruent with the effect she believes occurred in Marge. Likewise, the inferences Marge makes about Jane fit with her feelings as a result of Jane's action.

The action code that Jane used to convey her friendly feelings was decoded quite differently by Marge.

Why did Marge tell Jane she had been helpful if she really resented it?

PARAPHRASING
A Basic Communication Skill for
Improving Interpersonal Relationships

The Problem

Tell somebody your phone number and he will usually repeat it to make sure he heard it correctly. However, if you make a complicated statement, most people will express agreement or disagreement without trying to insure that they are responding to what you intended. Most people seem to assume that what they understand from a statement is what the other intended.

How do you check to make sure that you understand another person's ideas, information or suggestions as he intended them? How do you know his remark means the same to you as it does to him?

Of course, you can get the other person to clarify his remark by asking, "What do you mean?" or, "Tell me more." or by saying, "I don't understand." However, after he has elaborated, you still face the same question, "Am I understanding his idea as he intended it to be understood?" Your feeling of certainty is no evidence that you do in fact understand.

The Skill

If you state in your own way what his remark conveys to you, the other can begin to determine whether his message is coming through as he intended. Then, if he thinks you misunderstand, he can speak directly to the specific misunderstanding you have revealed. The term PARAPHRASE can be used for ANY MEANS OF SHOWING THE OTHER PERSON WHAT HIS IDEA OR SUGGESTION MEANS TO YOU.

Paraphrasing, then, is any way of revealing your understanding of the other person's comment in order to test your understanding.

An additional benefit of paraphrasing is that it lets the other know that you are interested in him. It is evidence that you do want to understand what he means.

If you can satisfy the other that you really do understand his point, he will probably be more willing to attempt to understand your views.

Paraphrasing, thus, is crucial in attempting to bridge the interpersonal gap. (1) It increases the accuracy of communication, and thus the degree of mutual or shared understanding. (2) The act of paraphrasing itself conveys feeling...your interest in the other, your concern to see how he views things.

Learning to Paraphrase

People sometimes think of paraphrasing as merely putting the other person's ideas in another way. They try to say the same thing with different words. Such word-swapping may result merely in the illusion of mutual understanding. See the following example:

Sarah: Jim should never have become a teacher.
Fred: You mean teaching isn't the right job for him?
Sarah: Exactly! Teaching is not the right job for Jim.

Instead of trying to reword Sarah's statement, Fred might have asked himself, "What does Sarah's statement mean to me?" In that case the interchange might have sounded like this:

Sarah: Jim should never have become a teacher.
Fred: You mean he is too harsh on the children...maybe even cruel?

Sarah: Oh, no. I meant that he has such expensive tastes that he can't ever earn enough as a teacher.
Fred: Oh, I see. You think he should have gone into a field that would have insured him a higher standard of living?
Sarah: Exactly! Teaching is not the right job for Jim.

Effective paraphrasing is not a trick or a verbal gimmick. It comes from an attitude, a desire to know what the other means. And to satisfy this desire you reveal the meaning his comment had for you so that the other can check whether it matches the meaning he intended to convey.

If the other's statement was general, it may convey something <u>specific</u> to you.

Larry: I think this is a very poor textbook.
You: Poor? You mean it has too many inaccuracies?
Larry: No, the text is accurate, but the book comes apart too easily.

Possibly the other's comment suggests an <u>example</u> to you.

Laura: This text has too many omissions; we shouldn't adopt it.
You: Do you mean, for example, that it contains nothing about the Negro's role in the development of America?
Laura: Yes, that's one example. It also lacks any discussion of the development of the arts in America.

If the speaker's comment was very specific, it may convey a <u>more general</u> idea to you.

Ralph: Do you have 25 pencils I can borrow for my class?
You: Do you just want something for them to write with? I have about 15 ball-point pens and 10 or 11 pencils.
Ralph: Great. Anything which writes will do.

Sometimes the other's idea will suggest its <u>inverse</u> or <u>opposite</u> to you.

Stanley: I think the Teachers' Union acts so irresponsibly because the administration has ignored them so long.
You: Do you mean the T.U. would be less militant now if the administration had consulted with them in the past?

Stanley: Certainly. I think the T.U. is being forced to more and more desperate measures.

To develop your skill in understanding others, try different ways of conveying your interest in understanding what they mean and revealing what the other's statements mean to you. Find out what kinds of response are helpful ways of paraphrasing for you.

The next time someone is angry with you or is criticizing you, try to paraphrase until you can demonstrate that you understand what he is trying to convey as he intends it. What effect does this have on your feelings and on his?

HANDLING MISUNDERSTANDINGS[1]

Dealing with Breakdowns in Communication

Real communication is very hard to achieve. We tend to judge, to evaluate, to approve or disapprove before we really understand what the other person is saying--before we understand the frame of reference from which he is talking. This tendency of most humans to react first by forming an evaluation of what has just been said, to evaluate it from their own point of view, is a major barrier to mutual interpersonal communication.

Progress toward understanding can be made when this evaluative tendency is avoided--when we listen with understanding--when we are actively listening to what is being said. What does this mean? It means to see the expressed idea and attitudes from the other person's point of view, to sense how it feels to him, to achieve his frame of reference in regard to the thing he is talking about.

This sounds simple, but it is not.

To test the quality of your understanding, try the following. If you see two people talking past each other, if you find yourself in an argument with your friend, with your wife or within a small group, stop the discussion for a moment, and for an experiment, institute this rule of Carl Rogers. "Each person can speak up for himself only after he has first restated the ideas and feelings of the previous speaker accurately--and to that speaker's satisfaction."

---

[1]The approach proposed here for dealing with misunderstandings was first stated by Carl Rogers in 1951. This abstract, elaboration and extension of his ideas for handling conflict was prepared by Floyd Mann, Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge, University of Michigan. (For more information, see Carl Rogers. On Becoming a Person. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961, Chapter 17.)

This would mean that before presenting your own point of view, it would be necessary for you to really achieve the other speaker's frame of reference--to understand his thoughts and feelings so well that you could summarize them for him. This is a very effective process for improving communications and relationships with others. It is much more difficult to do behaviorally than you would suspect.

What will happen if you try to do this during an argument?

You will find that your own next comments will have to be drastically revised. You will find the emotion going out of the discussion, the differences being reduced. There is a decrease in defensiveness, in exaggerated statements, in evaluating and critical behavior. Attitudes become more positive and problem solving. The differences which remain are of a rational and understandable sort. Or they are real differences in basic values.

What are the risks? The obstacles? What are the difficulties that keep this bit of knowledge from being utilized?

Try this and you risk being influenced by the other person. You might see it his way--have to change your position. There is the risk of change. In this sense, listening can be dangerous--and courage is required.

There is a second obstacle. It is just when emotions are strongest that it is most difficult to achieve the frame of reference of the other person or group. A third party, who is able to lay aside his own feelings and evaluations, can assist greatly by listening with understanding to each person or group and clarifying the views and attitudes each holds. A third party catalyst may, incidentally, have

great difficulty in intervening and proposing the use of this approach. Any intervention into a heated discussion can be interpreted by one party or the other as someone taking the other person's side. This is especially true if the third party asks you to try and state the other person's ideas and feelings when you have not really been listening, but thinking what you should say next when he pauses to take a breath.

Another difficulty stems from our notions as to what is proper to ask a person to do in a discussion. It seems quite within good taste to ask a person to restate how he sees the situation. But to ask him to restate the other man's position is not consistent with our common sense ways of handling differences. The one who would change the pattern--try to break out of the vicious circle of increasingly greater misunderstanding--must have enough confidence in himself to be able to propose something different. He will have to have an appreciation of how to go from dealing with misunderstandings to handling conflict and using differences--of how differences can be used to find more elegant solutions to problems. Equally useful will be an awareness that thesis ⟶ antithesis ⟶ synthesis is a potential outcome from a developmental discussion of differences. Discussions in which one person loses and the other wins seldom solve anything permanently. When a person senses a win-lose situation developing, it should be interpreted as a clue to the need for a new approach, a search for alternate solutions, to be sure there is not another answer to the problem.

The greatest difficulty of all, of course, is to learn to use the rule when you yourself are in an increasingly heated verbal exchange. Not to be dependent on a third person to intervene when you create or are a party to a growing misunderstanding is real evidence of understanding the approach proposed here. The full value of this rule is available to us only when each of us can note that we are getting increasingly irritated, angry and unable to communicate effectively...when we can use these signals to identify the situation in which we are personally involved and even trapped where the rule might be employed...<u>if</u> we could retrieve the rule from our memory, and <u>if</u> we could use it behaviorally in an effective manner.

WHEN TO USE A SKILL LIKE PARAPHRASING

Paraphrasing is a communication skill designed to help you understand others. This is one of four communication skills you will be introduced to during this series. The other three skills are behavior description, description of feeling and perception checking. The four skills are not new or unique and almost everyone uses them at different times. These skills can be learned, practiced, and used to help you understand the communication between you and others.

Of course, communication skills can seem overdone and artificial if used when it's not necessary. They are best used when you want to make sure that you and someone else clearly understand what is being said.

NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR

The Problem

Much is communicated by the words we use and the emphasis, or inflection, we give them. We also communicate in nonverbal ways such as frowning, crossing our arms, looking at the floor as we speak, blushing, looking at the clock or beckoning with a hand. Some nonverbal behaviors convey an idea, for example, putting a finger to your lips in a gesture of silence; others indicate feelings, for example, smiling or pounding your fist on a desk.

Nonverbal behavior is often more spontaneous than the words we use. It can present, therefore, a clearer picture of the meaning which the speaker intends to communicate than his words alone. There is a potential problem however. UNLESS WE USE THE SKILL OF PERCEPTION CHECKING, WE MAY SOMETIMES BE INTERPRETING OTHER PERSON'S NONVERBAL CUES INCORRECTLY. Closing one's eyes can be interpreted as boredom. However, some people close their eyes to shut out distractions or interruptions when they wish to concentrate or listen more closely to what is being said. It's important to be sure we know the correct meaning of any nonverbal behavior that influences us in the communication.

Another possible problem can arise when you communicate things nonverbally that you are unaware of. You probably use many spontaneous nonverbal mannerisms that others observe but that you are not conscious of using. These are part of your personal style of interpersonal communications. Some of these mannerisms may have obvious meaning to those around you. Some mannerisms you use may only be understood correctly by those who know you well. They may cause frequent confusion or misunderstanding

for those who do not know you well. It can be important to become aware of the nonverbal mannerisms which are part of your style. You can then use them in a way that matches what you are saying. You can then also help others to learn what they mean as part of your personal, individual style of communicating. For example, you might find it is helpful to tell others, "People sometimes think I'm doubting them when they see me raise my eyebrows. That's generally not the case for me. I have a habit of raising my eyebrows when I hear something that especially interests me."

The Skills

Three skills can help improve that part of interpersonal communication which is nonverbal. The first is the skill of "perception check". If you feel a person's nonverbal behavior is influencing your reaction to the person you are communicating with, you may be wise to check whether you have a correct understanding of that behavior.

The second skill is to recognize your own nonverbal behaviors. This is a difficult thing to learn. Few people have experience with observing themselves as they communicate. One way to do it is to use films or videotapes. An opportunity to use such expensive equipment to "see ourselves as others see us" can be revealing and extremely helpful. Another way to get such "feedback" is to ask others to watch you and describe your behaviors to you. You can learn to watch for clues that you may be communicating meanings nonverbally that are causing problems. If you suspect this is happening, it can sometimes help to suggest that the other person share his perception of how you are reacting. Getting him to use "perception check" may lead to a needed clarification as well as provide "feedback" to you about nonverbal behavior you are unaware of.

The third skill involves giving and receiving feedback, i.e., sharing impressions and reactions of the other person's behavior. A number of specific suggestions for giving and receiving feedback are given in another theory paper. Two especially important guidelines for clarifying meanings of nonverbal behavior are perception checking to be sure you understand what the other is seeing in you and being specific in asking him to observe your nonverbal mannerisms. Examples of being specific would be to say,

> "Watch and tell me after the meeting whether there are times you think I appeared to be bored."
>
> OR
>
> "Have I been doing anything as you spoke that indicated times I agreed or disagreed with your ideas?"

BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION[1]
A Basic Communication Skill for
Improving Interpersonal Relationships

The Problem

If you and another person are to discuss the way you work together or what is happening in your relationship, both of you must be able to talk about what each does that affects the other. This is not easy. Most of us have trouble describing another's behavior clearly enough that he can understand what actions of his we have in mind.

Instead of describing the other person's behavior we usually discuss his attitudes, his motivations, his traits and personality characteristics. Often our statements are more expressive of the way we feel about the other's actions than they are informing about his behavior. And yet we may be unaware of our feelings at the time.

Let's suppose you tell me that I am rude (a trait) or that I don't care about your opinion (my motivation). Because I am not trying to be rude and because I feel that I do care about your opinion, I don't understand what you are trying to communicate. We certainly have not moved closer to a shared understanding. However, if you point out that several times in the past few minutes I have interrupted you and have overridden you before you could finish what you were saying, I receive a more exact picture of which actions of mine are affecting you.

The Skill

Behavior description means reporting specific, observable actions of others without placing a value on them as right or wrong, bad or good, and without making accusations or generalizations about the other's motives, attitudes or personality traits.

---

[1]John L. Wallen

You try to let others know what behavior you are responding to by describing it clearly enough and specifically enough that they know what you observed. To do this you must describe visible evidence--actions that are open to anybody's observation. Sometimes, for practice, it is helpful to try beginning your description with "I saw that..." or "I noticed that..." or "I heard you say..." to remind yourself that you are trying to describe specific actions.

Example: "Jim, you've talked more than others on this topic. Several times you cut off others before they had finished."

NOT: "Jim, you're too rude." which names a trait and gives no evidence.

NOT: "Jim, you always want to hog the center of attention!" which inputes an undesirable motive or intention.

Example: "Bob, you've taken the opposite of nearly everything Harry has suggested today."

NOT: "Bob, you're just trying to show Harry up." which is an accusation of undesirable motivation.

NOT: "Bob, you're being stubborn." which is name calling.

Example: "Sam, you cut in before I had finished."

NOT: "Sam, you deliberately didn't let me finish." The word "deliberately" implies that Sam knowingly and intentionally cut you off. All that anybody can observe is that he did cut in before you had finished.

Several members of the group had told Ben that he was too arrogant. Ben was confused and puzzled by this judgment. He was confused because he didn't know what to do about it; he didn't know what it referred to. He was puzzled because he didn't feel <u>arrogant</u> or scornful of the others. In fact, he admitted that he really felt nervous and unsure of himself.

Finally, Joe commented that Ben often laughed explosively after making a comment that seemed to have no humorous aspects. Ben said he had been unaware of this. Others immediately recognized this was the behavior that made them perceive Ben as looking down on them and, therefore, as being arrogant. The pattern, thus, was as follows. When he made a statement of which he was somewhat unsure, Ben felt insecure. Ben's feelings of insecurity expressed themselves in an explosive laugh after making the statement ——→ the other person perceived Ben as laughing at him ——→ the other person felt put down and humiliated ——→ the other expressed his feeling of humiliation by calling Ben arrogant. Note that Ben had no awareness of his own behavior which was being misread until Joe accurately described what Ben was doing. Then Ben could see that his laugh was a way of attempting to cope with his own feelings of insecurity.

To develop skill in describing behavior you must sharpen your observation of what actually did occur. You must force yourself to pay attention to what is observable to hold inferences in abeyance. As you practice this you may find that many of your conclusions about others are based less on observable evidence than on your own feelings of affection, insecurity, irritation, jealousy or fear. For example, accusations that attribute undesirable motives to another are usually expressions of the speaker's negative feelings toward the other and not descriptions at all.

DEFENSIVE COMMUNICATION[1]

One way to understand communication is to view it as a people process rather than as a language process. If one is to make fundamental improvements in communication, he must make changes in interpersonal relationships. One possible type of alteration--and the one with which this paper is concerned--is that of reducing the degree of defensiveness.

Defensive behavior is defined as that behavior which occurs when an individual perceives threat or anticipates threat in the group. The person who behaves defensively, even though he also gives some attention to the common task, devotes an appreciable portion of his energy to defending himself. Besides talking about the topic, he thinks about how he appears to others, how he may be seen more favorably, how he may win, dominate, impress, or escape punishment, and/or how he may avoid or mitigate a perceived or an anticipated attack.

Such inner feelings and outward acts tend to create similarly defensive postures in others; and, if unchecked, the ensuing circular response becomes increasingly destructive. Defensive behavior, in short, engenders defensive listening, and this in turn produces postural, facial and verbal cues which raise the defense level of the original communicator.

Defense arousal prevents the listener from concentrating upon the message. Not only do defensive communicators send off multiple value, motive and affect cues, but also defensive recipients distort what they receive.

---

[1]Jack R. Gibb. "Defensive Communication." The Journal of Communication. 11: 141-148; September 1961.

As a person becomes more and more defensive, he becomes less and less able to perceive accurately the motives, the values and the emotions of the sender. My analyses of tape recorded discussions revealed that increases in defensive behavior were correlated positively with losses in efficiency in communication.[2] Specifically, distortions became greater when defensive states existed in the groups.

The converse, moreover, also is true. The more "supportive" or defense reductive the climate, the less the receiver reads into the communication distorted loadings which arise from projections of his own anxieties, motives and concerns. As defenses are reduced, the receivers become better able to concentrate upon the structure, the content and the cognitive meanings of the message.

In working over an eight-year period with recordings of discussions occurring in varied settings, I developed the six pairs of defensive and supportive categories presented in Table 1. Behavior which a listener perceives as possessing any of the characteristics listed in the left-hand column arouses defensiveness, whereas that which he interprets as having any of the qualities designated as supportive reduces defensive feelings. The degree of which these reactions occur depends upon the personal level of defensiveness and upon the general climate in the group at the time.[3]

---

[2]Jack R. Gibb. "Defense Level and Influence Potential in Small Groups." Leadership and Interpersonal Behavior. Edited by L. Petrullo and B. M. Bass. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961, pps. 66-81.

[3]Jack R. Gibb. "Sociopsychological Processes of Group Instruction." The Dynamics of Instructional Groups. Edited by N. B. Henry. Fifty-Ninth Yearbook, Part II, National Society for the Study of Education, 1960. pps. 115-135.

TABLE 1

CATEGORIES OF BEHAVIOR CHARACTERISTIC OF SUPPORTIVE AND DEFENSIVE CLIMATES IN SMALL GROUPS

DEFENSIVE CLIMATES	SUPPORTIVE CLIMATES
1. Evaluation	1. Description
2. Control	2. Problem Orientation
3. Strategy	3. Spontaneity
4. Neutrality	4. Emphathy
5. Superiority	5. Equality
6. Certainty	6. Provisionalism

Speech or other behavior which appears evaluative increases defensiveness. If by expression, manner of speech, tone of voice or verbal content the sender seems to be evaluating or judging the listener, then the receiver goes on guard. Of course, other factors may inhibit the reaction. If the listener thought that the speaker regarded him as an equal and was being open and spontaneous, for example, the evaluativeness in a message would be neutralized and perhaps not even perceived. This same principle applies equally to the other five categories of potentially defense-producing climates. The six sets are interactive.

Because our attitudes toward other persons are frequently, and often necessarily, evaluative, expressions which the defensive person will regard as nonjudgmental are hard to frame. Even the simplest question usually conveys the answer that the sender wishes or implies the response that would fit into his value system. A mother, for example, immediately following an earth tremor that shook the house, sought for her small son with the question: "Bobby, where are you?" The timid

and plaintive "Mommy, I didn't do it." indicated how Bobby's chronic mild defensiveness predisposed him to react with a projection of his own guilt and in the context of his chronic assumption that questions are full of accusation.

Anyone who has attempted to train professionals to use information-seeking speech with neutral affect appreciates how difficult it is to teach a person to say even the simple "Who did that?" without being seen as accusing. Speech is so frequently judgmental that there is a reality base for the defensive interpretations which are so common.

When insecure, group members are particularly likely to place blame, to see others as fitting into categories of good or bad, to make moral judgments of their colleagues, and to question the value, motive and affect loadings of the speech which they hear. Since value loadings imply a judgment of others, a belief that the standards of the speaker differ from his own, causes the listener to become defensive.

Descriptive speech, in contrast to that which is evaluative, tends to arouse a minimum of uneasiness. Speech acts which the listener perceives as genuine requests for information or as material with neutral loadings are descriptive. Specifically, presentations of feelings, events, perceptions or processes which do not ask or imply that the receiver change behavior or attitude are minimally defense producing. The difficulty in avoiding overtone is illustrated by the problems of news reporters in writing stories about unions, communists, Negroes and religious activities without tipping off the "party" line

of the newspaper. One can often tell from the opening words in a news article which side the editorial policy favors.

Speech which is used to control the listener evokes resistance. In most of our social intercourse someone is trying to do something to someone else--to change an attitude, to influence behavior or to restrict the field of activity. The degree to which attempts to control produce defensiveness depends upon the openness of the effort, for a suspicion that hidden motives exist heightens resistance. For this reason, attempts of nondirective therapists and progressive educators to refrain from imposing a set of values, a point of view or a problem solution upon the receivers meet with many barriers. Since the norm is control, noncontrollers must earn the perceptions that their efforts have no hidden motives. A bombardment of persuasive "messages" in the fields of politics, education, special causes, advertising, religion, medicine, industrial relations and guidance has bred cynical and paranoidal responses in listeners.

Implicit in all attempts to alter another person is the assumption by the change agent that the person to be altered is inadequate. That the speaker secretly views the listener as ignorant, unable to make his own decisions, uninformed, immature, unwise or possessed of wrong or inadequate attitudes is a subconscious perception which gives the latter a valid base for defensive reactions.

Methods of control are many and varied. Legalistic insistence on detail, restrictive regulations and policies, conformity norms and all laws are among the methods. Gestures, facial expressions, other forms of nonverbal communication, and even such simple acts as holding

a door open in a particular manner are means of imposing one's will upon another and hence are potential sources of resistance.

Problem orientation, on the other hand, is the antithesis of persuasion. When the sender communicates a desire to collaborate in defining a mutual problem and in seeking its solution, he tends to create the same problem orientation in the listener; and, of greater importance, he implies that he has no predetermined solution, attitude or method to impose. Such behavior is permissive in that it allows the receiver to set his own goals, make his own decisions and evaluate his own progress--or to share with the sender in doing so. The exact methods of attaining permissiveness are not known, but they must involve a constellation of cues and they certainly go beyond mere verbal assurances that the communicator has no hidden desires to exercise control.

When the sender is perceived as engaged in a stratagem involving ambiguous and multiple motivations, the receiver becomes defensive. No one wishes to be a guinea pig, a role player or an impressed actor, and no one likes to be the victim of some hidden motivation. That which is concealed, also, may appear larger than it really is with the degree of defensiveness of the listener determining the perceived size of the suppressed element. The intense reaction of the reading audience to the material in the Hidden Persuaders indicates the prevalence of defensive reactions to multiple motivations behind strategy. Group members who are seen as "taking a role," as feigning emotion, as toying with their colleagues, as withholding information or as having special sources of

data are especially resented. One participant once complained that another was "using a listening technique" on him!

A large part of the adverse reaction to much of the so-called human relations training is a feeling against what are perceived as gimmicks and tricks to fool or to "involve" people, to make a person think he is making his own decision or to make the listener feel that the sender is genuinely interested in him as a person. Particularly violent reactions occur when it appears that someone is trying to make a strategem appear spontaneous. One person has reported a boss who incurred resentment by habitually using the gimmick of "spontaneously" looking at his watch and saying, "My gosh, look at the time--I must run to an appointment." The belief was that the boss would create less irritation by honestly asking to be excused.

Similarly, the deliberate assumption of guilelessness and natural simplicity is especially resented. Monitoring the tapes of feedback and evaluation sessions in training groups indicates the surprising extent to which members perceive the strategies of their colleagues. This perceptual clarity may be quite shocking to the strategist, who usually feels that he has cleverly hidden the motivational aura around the "gimmick."

This aversion to deceit may account for one's resistance to politicians who are suspected of behind-the-scenes planning to get his vote, to psychologists whose listening apparently is motivated by more than the manifest or content-level interest in his behavior, or to the sophisticated, smooth or clever person whose "one-upmanship" is marked

with guile. In training groups the role-flexible person frequently is resented because his changes in behavior are perceived as strategic maneuvers.

In contrast, behavior which appears to be spontaneous and free of deception is defense reductive. If the communicator is seen as having a clean id, as having noncomplicated motivations, as being straightforward and honest and as behaving spontaneously in response to the situation, he is likely to arouse minimal defense.

When neutrality in speech appears to the listener to indicate a lack of concern for his welfare, he becomes defensive. Group members usually desire to be perceived as valued persons, as individuals of special worth and as objects of concern and affection. The clinical, detached, person-is-an-object-of-study attitude on the part of many psychologist-trainers is resented by group members. Speech with low affect that communicates little warmth or caring is in such contrast with the affect-laden speech in social situations that it sometimes communicates rejection.

Communication that conveys empathy for the feelings and respect for the worth of the listener, however, is particularly supportive and defense reductive. Reassurance results when a message indicates that the speaker identifies himself with the listener's problems, shares his feelings and accepts his emotional reactions at face value. Abortive efforts to deny the legitimacy of the receiver's emotions by assuring the receiver that he need not feel bad, that he should not feel rejected, or that he is overly anxious, though often intended as support giving, may

impress the listener as lack of acceptance. The combination of understanding and empathizing with the other person's emotions with no accompanying effort to change him apparently is supportive at a high level.

The importance of gestural behavioral cues in communicating empathy should be mentioned. Apparently spontaneous facial and bodily evidences of concern are often interpreted as especially valid evidence of deep-level acceptance.

When a person communicates to another that he feels superior in position, power, wealth, intellectual ability, physical characteristics or other ways, he arouses defensiveness. Here, as with the other sources of disturbance, whatever arouses feelings of inadequacy causes the listener to center upon the affect loading of the statement rather than upon the cognitive elements. The receiver then reacts by not hearing the message, by forgetting it, by competing with the sender, or by becoming jealous of him.

The person who is perceived as feeling superior communicates that he is not willing to enter into a shared problem-solving relationship, that he probably does not desire feedback, that he does not require help, and/or that he will be likely to try to reduce the power, the status or the worth of the receiver.

Many ways exist for creating the atmosphere that the sender feels himself equal to the listener. Defenses are reduced when one perceives the sender as being willing to enter into participative planning with mutual trust and respect. Differences in talent, ability, worth, appearance,

status and power often exist, but the low defense communicator seems to attach little importance to these distinctions.

The effects of dogmatism in producing defensiveness are well known. Those who seem to know the answers, to require no additional data and to regard themselves as teachers rather than as coworkers tend to put others on guard. Moreover, in my experiment, listeners often perceived manifest expressions of certainty as connoting inward feelings of inferiority. They saw the dogmatic individual as needing to be right, as wanting to win an argument rather than solve a problem, and as seeing his ideas as truths to be defended. This kind of behavior often was associated with acts which others regarded as attempts to exercise control. People who were "right" seemed to have low tolerance for members who were "wrong," that is, those who did not agree with the sender.

One reduces the defensiveness of the listener when he communicates that he is willing to experiment with his own behavior, attitudes and ideas. The person who appears to be taking provisional attitudes, to be investigating issues rather than taking sides on them, to be problem solving rather than debating, and to be willing to experiment and explore tends to communicate that the listener may have some control over the shared quest or the investigation of the ideas. If a person is genuinely searching for information and data, he does not resent help or company along the way.

Conclusion

The implications of the above material for the parent, the teacher, the manager, the administrator or the therapist are fairly obvious.

Arousing defensiveness interferes with communication and thus makes it difficult--and sometimes impossible--for anyone to convey ideas clearly and to move effectively toward the solution of therapeutic, educational or managerial problems.

DESCRIPTION OF FEELINGS[1]
A Basic Communication Skill for
Improving Interpersonal Relationships

The Problem

To communicate your own feelings accurately or to understand those of others is difficult.

First, expressions of emotion take many different forms. Feelings can express themselves in bodily changes, in actions and in words. (See the diagram on the next page.)

Second, any specific expression of feeling may come from very different feelings. A blush, for example, may indicate the person is feeling pleased, but it may also indicate that he feels annoyed, embarrassed or uneasy.

Likewise, a specific feeling does not always get expressed in the same way. For example, a child's feeling of affection for his teacher may lead him to blush when she stands near his desk, to touch her as he passes her, to watch her as she walks around the room, to tell her "You're nice," to bring his pet turtle to show her, etc.; different forms of expression indicate the child's feeling of affection.

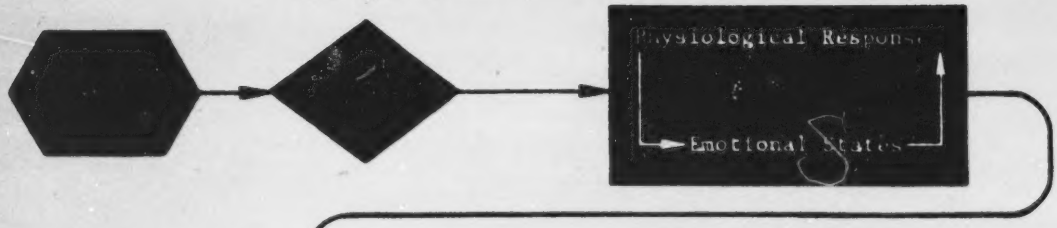
Communication of feelings, thus, is often inaccurate or even misleading. What looks like an expression of anger, for example, often turns out to result from hurt feelings or from fear.

A further obstacle to the accurate communication of feelings is that your perception of what another is feeling is based on so many different kinds of information. When somebody speaks, you notice more than just the words he says. You note his gestures, voice tone, posture, facial expression, etc. In addition, you are aware of the immediate present

[1]John L. Wallen

HOW EMOTIONAL STATES EXPRESS THEMSELVES

Somebody's Actions | Interpreted via Silent Assumptions | Lead to Some Effect in You



Even when you are unaware of your feelings, your emotional state may express itself in these ways.

Physiological Expression: Heart Rate, Breathing, Blushing, Sweating, Weeping, Trembling...

Expression in Actions: Hugging, Smiling, Hitting, Looking At or Away, Slouching, Biting Lips...

Expression in Words:

COMMANDS:	"Shut up!"
QUESTIONS:	"Is it safe to drive this fast?"
ACCUSATIONS:	"You don't care about me."
NAME-CALLING:	"You're rude."
SARCASM:	"You certainly make a person feel appreciated!"
JUDGMENTS:	
Approval:	"You're wonderful!"
Disapproval:	"You talk too much."

You can describe your feelings only when you are aware of what they are.

DESCRIPTIONS OF FEELING:

"I hurt too much to hear any more."
"I'm afraid of going this fast."
"It hurt my feelings when you forgot my birthday."
"I felt put down when you ignored my comment."
"I resent it that you don't seem to appreciate what I did for you."
"I really enjoy your sense of humor."
"I'm getting bored and beginning to tune out."

situation--the context in which the interaction is occurring. You are aware of whether somebody is watching, for example. Therefore, you make assumptions about how the situation influences what the other is feeling. Beyond all of this you also have expectations based on your past experiences with the other individual.

You make inferences from all of this information--words, nonverbal cues, the situational context, your expectations of the other. These inferences are influenced by your own current emotional state. What you perceive the other to be feeling, then, often depends more upon what vou are feeling than upon the other person's actions or words. For example, if you are feeling guilty about something, you may perceive others as angry with you. If you are feeling depressed and discouraged about yourself, others may seem to be expressing disapproval of you.

Communicating your own and understanding the feelings of others is an extremely difficult task. And, yet, if you wish others to respond to you as a person, you must help them understand how you feel. Likewise, if you are concerned about the other as a person and about your relationship with him, you must try to understand his emotional reactions.

The Skill

Although we usually try to describe our ideas clearly and accurately, we often do not try to describe our feelings clearly. Feelings get expressed in many different ways, but we do not usually attempt to identify the feeling itself.

One way to describe a feeling is to identify or name it. "I feel angry." "I feel embarrassed." "I feel comfortable with you." However, we do not have enough names of labels to encompass the broad range of human

emotions, and so we invent other ways to describe our feelings, such as the use of similes. "I feel like a tiny frog in a huge pond." A girl, whose friendly overture had just been rebuffed, said, "I feel like I have just had an arm amputated."

A third way to describe a feeling is to report what kind of action the feeling urges you to do. "I feel like hugging and hugging you." "I'd like to slap you." "I wish I could walk off and leave you."

In addition, many figures of speech serve as descriptions of feeling. "I just swallowed a bushel of spring sunshine."

Describing Your Own Feelings

When describing your feelings, try to make clear what feelings you are experiencing by identifying them. The statement must (1) refer to "I," "me," or "my," and (2) specify some kind of feeling by name, simile, action urge or other figure of speech.

The following examples show the relation between two kinds of expressions of feeling, (1) those that describe what the speaker is feeling, and (2) those that do not. Notice that expressions of feeling which describe the speaker's emotional state are more precise, less capable of misinterpretation and, thus, convey more accurately what feelings are affecting the speaker.

Expressing feeling by describing your emotional state	Expressing feeling without describing your emotional state
"I feel embarrassed." "I feel pleased." "I feel annoyed."	Blushing and say nothing.
"I feel angry!" "I'm worried about this." "I feel hurt by what you said."	Suddenly becoming silent in the midst of a conversation.

"I enjoy her sense of humor." "She's a wonderful person."
"I respect her abilities and competence."
"I love her but I feel I shouldn't say so."

"I hurt too much to hear any more." "Shut up!!!"
"I feel angry at myself."
"I'm angry with you."

Because emotional states express themselves simultaneously in words, in actions and in physiological changes, a person may convey contradictory messages about what he is feeling. For example, his actions (a smile or laugh) may contradict his words (that he is angry). The clearest emotional communication occurs when the speaker's description of what he is feeling matches and, thus, amplifies what is being conveyed by his actions and other nonverbal expressions of feeling.

The aim in describing your own feelings is to start a dialogue that will improve your relationship with the other person. After all, others need to know how you feel if they are to take your feelings into account. Negative feelings are indicator signals that something may be going wrong in a relationship with another person. To ignore negative feelings is like ignoring a warning light that indicates an electrical circuit is overloaded. Negative feelings are a signal that the two of you need to check for misunderstanding and faulty communication.

After discussing how each sees the situation or your relationship, you may discover that your feelings resulted from false perceptions of the situation and of the other person's motives. In this case, your feelings would probably change. However, the other may discover that his actions are arousing feelings in you that he wasn't aware of--feelings that others beside you might experience in response to his behavior--and <u>he</u> may change.

In short, describing your feelings should not be an effort to coerce the other into changing so that you won't feel as you do. Rather, you report your inner state as just one more piece of information that is necessary if the two of you are to understand and improve your relationship.

Perception Check

You describe what you perceive to be the other's inner state in order to check whether you understand what he feels. That is, you test to see whether you have decoded his expressions of feeling accurately. You transform his expressions of feeling into a tentative description of his feeling. A good perception check conveys this message, "I want to understand your feelings--is this (making a description of his feelings) the way you feel?"

Examples:

"I get the impression you are angry with me. Are you?"
(NOT: "Why are you so angry with me?" This is mind reading, not perception checking.)

"Am I right that you feel disappointed that nobody commented on your suggestion?"

"I'm not sure whether your expression means that my comment hurt your feelings, irritated or confused you."

Note that a perception check describes the other's feelings, and does not express disapproval or approval. It merely conveys, "This is how I understand your feelings. Am I accurate?"

THE CONCEPT OF FEEDBACK

Bats can fly blindfolded through a maze of tightly stretched piano wires without striking one. Blindfolded porpoises can avoid obstacles while swimming at top speed. Both are sending out sound waves which bounce off surrounding objects. The reflected sounds which return to the animal are interpreted almost instantaneously. They give him a picture of his surroundings as effectively as light waves reflecting into the eyes of a person. This remarkable ability to "see" by listening depends, of course, on the animal sending out the messages which can bounce back to him. We call these returning messages feedback.

Electronic scientists used this principal of feedback to develop radar. They had to overcome many difficult problems in developing effective radar systems. They had to be sure that outgoing signals would scan all possible relevant objects. They had to be sure that the returning feedback signals were heard--understood--and the most important ones sorted out from among the many feedback messages being received.

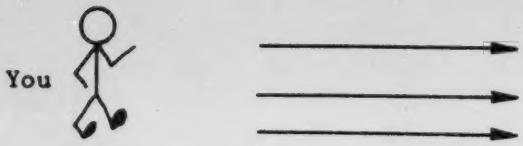
You and I can use the concept of feedback to improve our skills of interpersonal communications. We will need to overcome the same kinds of problems that electronic scientists were faced with in order to use feedback effectively. We need to learn ways to scan for obstacles we may not be aware of in our abilities to communicate most effectively. We must be sure we receive the feedback, understand it, and can identify the most important messages. Most important, we must have ways to use the feedback for improvement once we have received it. In many instances, this process will necessitate some help from other people. To paraphrase the poet Robert Burns, the idea here is to "see ourselves as others see us."

There are some things we know about ourselves and some we don't know. There are some things that others know about us and some they don't know. For you and any other specific person this can be represented by the following diagram known as the Joe-Harry Window.*

Things about myself the other:	Things About Myself That I-- Know	Dont' Know
Knows	Common Knowledge	My blind spots such as bad breath, that my best friends haven't told me about yet
Does Not Know	My secrets and things I haven't had a chance to tell yet	My hidden potential of things I never dreamed I could do or be

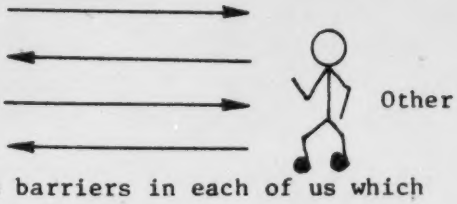
As you develop a helping relationship with another person--a relationship where each of you help the other to grow--the "blind spot" and "secret" areas become smaller as more information about each other becomes common knowledge. It is not meant to be implied here that a person should be completely or indiscriminantly open. There are things about each of us that aren't relevant to the helping relationships we have with others. As those things that are relevant are shared, and as they are found to be helpful, a trust develops that allows us to explore and discover new abilities in our area of hidden potential. One of the most important ways this happens is through the giving and receiving of feedback.

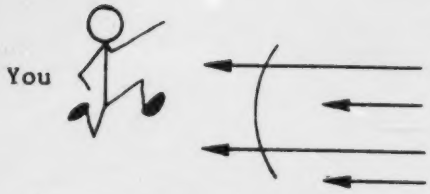
*Adapted from "The Johari Window" in Group Processes by Joseph Luft. Palo Alto, California: The National Press, 1963, pp. 10-15.



Our behavior constantly sends messages to others.

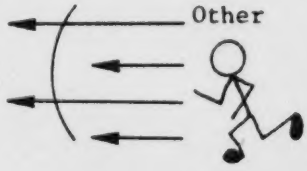
WHEN THE OTHER SHARES his reaction to our behavior, this is called FEEDBACK.

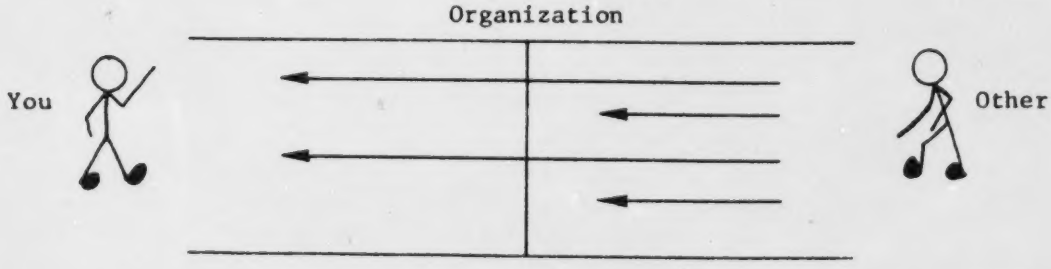




There are barriers in each of us which allow us to receive some of this feedback, but which screen some of it out.

There are barriers in the other which allow him to share some of his reactions, but cause him to hold back on others.





There may be barriers in the way our organizations operate that make it hard for some kinds of feedback to take place.

There are also THINGS IN US, IN THE OTHER, AND IN THE WAY OUR ORGANIZATIONS operate that FACILITATE constructive exchanges of feedback.

A number of guidelines can help make the giving and receiving of feedback effective. Things usually work best when these guidelines are followed. However, these are only guidelines--not rules. There may be exceptions to each one. Don't think of these guidelines as the only way to do it. Think, rather, of whether "the usual guidelines" apply in "this particular instance."

Some Guidelines for Giving Feedback

1. READINESS OF THE RECEIVER
   Give the feedback only when there are clear indications the receiver is ready to be aware of it. If not ready, the receiver will be apt not to hear it or to misinterpret it.

2. DESCRIPTIVE NOT INTERPRETIVE
   Giving feedback should be like acting as a "candid camera." It is a clear report of the facts, rather than your ideas about why things happened or what was meant by them. It is up to the receiver to consider the whys or the meanings or to invite the feedback giver to do this considering with him.

3. RECENT HAPPENINGS
   The closer the feedback is given to the time the event took place the better. When feedback is given immediately, the receiver is most apt to be clear on exactly what is meant. The feelings associated with the event still exist so that this, too, can be part of understanding what the feedback means.

4. APPROPRIATE TIMES
   Feedback should be given when there is a good chance it can be used helpfully. It may not be helpful if the receiver feels there is currently other work that demands more attention. Or, critical feedback in front of others may be seen as damaging rather than helpful.

5. NEW THINGS
   There is a tendency in giving feedback to say only the obvious. Consider whether the thing you are reacting to really may be new information for the receiver. Many times, the thing which may be helpful new information is not simply a report of what you saw the receiver doing, but rather the way it caused you to feel or the situation you felt it put you in.

6. CHANGEABLE THINGS
   Feedback can lead to improvements only when it is about things which can be changed.

7. NOT DEMAND A CHANGE
The concept of feedback should not be confused with the concept of requesting a person to change. It is up to the receiver to consider whether he wishes to attempt a change on the basis of new information. If you wish to include your reaction that you would like to see him change in certain ways, this might be helpful. What is not apt to be helpful is to say, in effect, "I have told you what's wrong with you, now change!"

8. NOT AN OVERLOAD
When learning how to give feedback, we sometimes tend to overdo it. It's as though we were telling the receiver, "I just happen to have a list of reactions here and if you'll settle back for a few hours I'll read them off to you." The receiver replies, "Wait a minute. I'd prefer you gave them to me one at a time at moments when I can really work on them. I can't handle a long list all at once."

9. GIVEN TO BE HELPFUL
You should always consider your own reasons for giving your reactions. Are you trying to be helpful to the receiver? Or, are you really just getting rid of some of your own feelings or using the occasion to try to get the receiver to do something that would be helpful for you? If you are doing more than trying to help the receiver with feedback you should share your additional reasons so he will know better how to understand what you are saying.

10. GIVER SHARES SOMETHING
Giving feedback can sometimes take on the feeling of a "one-upsmanship" situation. The receiver goes away feeling as though he's "not as good" as the giver, because it was his potential for improvement that was focused upon. The giver may feel in the position of having given a lecture from the lofty pinnacle of some imaginary state of perfection. The exchange often can be kept in better balance by the giver including some of his own feelings and concerns.

Some Guidelines for Receiving Feedback

1. STATE WHAT YOU WANT FEEDBACK ABOUT
Let the giver know specific things about which you would like his reactions.

2. CHECK WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD
Check to be sure you understand what the giver is trying to say. Because the topic is your own behavior, you may tend to move toward thinking about the meanings of the feedback before you are sure you are hearing it as it was intended.

3. SHARE YOUR REACTIONS TO THE FEEDBACK
Your own feelings may become so involved that you forget to share your reactions to his feedback with the giver. If he goes off not knowing whether or not he has been helpful and how you now feel toward him, he may be less apt to give you feedback in the future. The giver needs your reactions about what was helpful and what was not so as to know he is improving his ability to give you useful feedback.

THE INTERPERSONAL EFFECT OF VARIOUS RESPONSES*

FREEING EFFECTS: Increases other's autonomy as a person; increases sense of equality

Active, attentive listening: Responsive listening, not just silence

Paraphrasing: Testing to insure the message you received was the one he sent

Perception check: Showing your desire to relate to and understand him as a person by checking your perception of his inner state; showing acceptance of feelings

Seeking information to help you understand him: Questions directly relevant to what he has said, not ones that introduce new topics

Offering information relevant to the other's concerns: He may or may not use it

Sharing information that has influenced your feelings and viewpoints

Directly reporting your own feelings

Offering new alternatives: Action proposals offered as hypotheses to be tested

BINDING-CUEING EFFECTS: Diminishes other's autonomy by increasing sense of subordination

Changing the subject without explanation: For example, to avoid the other's feelings

Explaining the other, interpreting his behavior: "You do that because your mother always...." Binds him to past behavior or may be seen as an effort to get him to change

Advice and persuasion: "What you should do is...."

Vigorous agreement: Binds him to present position--limits his changing his mind

Expectations: Binds to past, "You never did this before. What's wrong?" Cues him to future action, "I'm sure you will...." "I know you can do it."

Denying his feelings: "You don't really mean that!" "You have no reason to feel that way!" Generalizations, "Everybody has problems like that."

*John L. Wallen, Portland, Oregon, 1965. (mimeo)

The Interpersonal Effect of Various Responses (Cont.)

Approval on personal grounds: Praising the other for thinking, feeling or acting in ways that you want him to, that is, for conforming to your standards

Disapproval on personal grounds: Blaming or censuring the other for thinking, acting, and feeling in ways you do not want him to; imputing unworthy motives to him

Commands, orders: Telling the other what to do. Includes, "Tell me what to do!"

Emotional obligations: Control through arousing feelings of shame and inferiority. "How can you do this to me when I have done so much for you?"

THE EFFECT OF ANY RESPONSE DEPENDS UPON THE DEGREE OF TRUST IN THE RELATIONSHIP

The less trust, the less freeing effect from any response. The more trust, the less binding effect from any response.

EMOTIONS AS PROBLEMS

The way we deal with emotion is the most frequent source of difficulty in our relations with others. Although each of us continually experiences feelings about others and about himself, most of us have not yet learned to accept and use our emotions constructively. We not only are uncomfortable when others express strong feelings, but most of us do not even recognize, much less accept, many of our own feelings.

We know, intellectually, that it is natural to have feelings. We know that the capacity to feel is as much a part of being a person as is the capacity to think and reason. We are aware of incompleteness in the one who seems only to think about life and does not seem to feel--to care about, enjoy, be angered and hurt by what goes on around him. We know all this, and yet we feel that feelings are disruptive, the source of obstacles and problems in living and working with others.

It is not our feelings that are the source of difficulty in our relations with others but the way we deal with them or our failure to use them.

Because of our negative attitude toward emotions, because of our fear of and discomfort with our feelings, we spend much effort trying, in one way or another, to deny or ignore them. Look around you and observe how you and others deal with feelings. Make your own observations and see if they support or contradict the point that our usual reponse is some variation of, "Don't feel that way."

To the person expressing disappointment, discouragement or depression we say things like, "Cheer up!" "Don't let it get you down." "There's no use crying over spilt milk." "Things will get better." In short, "Don't feel that way." To the sorrowing or hurting person we advise,

"Don't cry. Put your mind on something pleasant." We tell the angry person, "Simmer down. There's no point in getting angry. Let's be objective." To the person expressing joy and satisfaction in something he has done we caution, "Better watch out. Pride goeth before a fall." In our various group meetings we counsel each other, "Let's keep feelings out of this. Let's be rational."

MATCHING BEHAVIOR

As people enter into an interpersonal relationship, there are goals they wish to accomplish in that relationship. They may be as diverse as asking a girl to be your wife, or to wanting to terminate a relationship; from wanting to borrow money, or to wanting to let a person know how much you care about him. The goals or purposes of a relationship are as varied as there are wishes and wants. Problems arise in a relationship when a person's intentions are not congruent with his behavior. If a person is angry and wants to punish but acts in ways that don't show anger, the relationship suffers. Rogers defined congruence as "...an accurate matching of experiencing and awareness." He then formulated a general principle concerning congruency and its effect on interpersonal relationships.

> The greater the congruence of experience, awareness and communication on the part of one individual, the more the ensuing relationship will involve: a tendency toward reciprocal communication with a quality of increasing congruence; a tendency toward more mutually accurate understanding of the communication; improved psychological adjustment and functioning in both parties, mutual satisfaction in the relationship.[1]

With this principle in mind we can conclude that if the intentions a person brings into a relationship are accurately communicated, the greater the trust and the better the relationship between the two individuals.

An individual's intentions may be communicated either verbally or nonverbally. Since a person's intentions are known only to himself, the

[1]Rogers, Carl. On Becoming A Person. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin. 1961, page 344.

only way another person is able to determine what your intentions are is through your words or behavior. When there is consistency between words and behavior, mutual trust is developed and a more meaningful relationship is established. The converse is also true--inconsistency between words and behavior breeds suspicion and distrust.

WHAT IS A NORM?

A norm exists when most people in a group arrive at doing a particular thing in a particular way, because they have come to expect each other to behave that way. Here are some examples. When formally introduced, most men in the United States are expected to include a handshake in their greeting while women may or may not. In some family groups, most members of the family usually get their own breakfast on Sunday morning. In some faculty groups, most members usually address each other by their last names when in the faculty lounge. In other faculty groups, first names are the norm when in the faculty lounge. Some faculties don't have a lounge.

Sometimes a norm is referred to as a custom or style. It may relate to specific rules that have been set forth. It may be simply thought of as the "in" thing to do. It may be a thing that most people in a particular group do without ever having thought clearly about it. A norm can develop so that everybody does a thing the same way. "All the women in this group wear dark hats on Sunday." Or the norm can be, "All the women in this group do whatever they please about wearing hats on Sunday." Or, "Most of the women wear dark hats on Sunday, but a few can be expected not to wear hats at all." Thus, a norm doesn't necessarily mean that everyone does a thing exactly in the same way. The idea is not one of conformity. Indeed, a norn can develop to support variety. A norm may say, "It's good to have differences."

Norms are not built from scratch. Norms develop from the values, expectations and learned behaviors that the individuals in a group bring with them. A norm in a particular group is usually arrived at

implicitly. That is, people arrive at their way of doing the thing in question without giving much thought or discussion to it. Most people don't sit on the floor when they find themselves in a room that appears to be arranged formally. Most people don't remain standing when they are at the beach. But, most people don't ask others about such things. They simply do, or don't do, them in certain ways because this is what they have come to expect. They are following norms.

Norms exert a powerful influence on what most of us communicate under certain circumstances to whom, when and in what ways. Such influences are seldom looked at. It's even more rare that we attempt to change norms to better suit our needs and desires. Normally we simply live with them. Yet norms have far reaching impacts. To illustrate, what norms have developed in your small group which is meeting at the moment about who sits where? If you have fallen into a clear pattern of certain people sitting next to certain others, how has this affected who talks to whom about what? If the pattern has been one of shifting seating arrangements, what effect has this had on informal exchanges--on who asks whom for clarification, help or ideas.

Discuss in your group what norms have developed about seating, if any, and how this may be affecting communications. If no norms about seating seem clear, discuss why they may not have evolved (since they tend to form rapidly in groups) and how your communications are being affected. Continue to discuss other kinds of norms you can see that your group has formed concerning communications such as:

When you have been asked to discuss things as a small group (six or more members), how does the discussion usually start out?

How is boredom or frustration generally expressed, if at all?

If the norm is that boredom or frustration is almost never expressed in the group, why is this so?

Most groups develop norms about things they "do" and "don't" talk about. What topics are "do's" and "don'ts" in your group?

Some groups tend to have an intensive climate where people are frequently on the "edge of their chairs." Others are low key. Still others have a pattern of sharp ups and downs of intensity. What is the norm in your group and why?

What other norms have developed in your group?

FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

Communication patterns are affected by many things--by past history and tradition, by attitudes toward participation, by norms about what is proper to talk about when, by interpersonal relations and who talks with whom, by how much trust and openness there is, by how skillful people are. Patterns are also shaped by the physical environment--do meeting rooms encourage one- or two-way communication, e.g., are the chairs movable or fixed? Do lounges or dining rooms stimulate sociability? Do living and transportation conditions encourage after-work relating? What forces outside the work setting have an impact on communications within?

This session is designed to increase awareness of the fact that in organizations and work groups there are both formal and informal communications, each with its own setting and its own network which may overlap but be different. The session is also designed to increase awareness that the way individuals behave will facilitate or hinder communications within an organization. It will provide practice in diagnosing communication patterns in terms of what behaviors are facilitating and/or hindering.

Illustrations of facilitating behavior might include careful listening, participating freely, providing information, defining unclear terms, asking questions, giving own opinion, suggesting alternatives or relieving tension. Inhibiting behaviors might include talking too much, not listening to others, withdrawing whenever there is a problem or ridiculing and refusing to consider alternatives.

Formalized communication in an organization is a common phenomenon to all involved. For our exercise we need to examine its purpose

appropriateness and effect. Many times it accomplishes its basic purpose--that of informing all who need to be concerned. The usual format requires information flow from the person responsible. A principal, vice principal or department head will circulate a bulletin, announce over a public address system or conduct a meeting to disseminate that which he feels is important.

Requests for supplies, audiovisual equipment, books, etc., usually in triplicate, are common to all of us. It is a fact of life, a two-way process which, when efficient, is effective, simple, yet impersonal.

By contrast, individuals not in titled positions are often fountains of information and influence. Friendship groups, the noncertified personnel, old timers, etc., may literally control situations not touched by the formal lines as defined.

Formal lines of communication from outside an organization have great influence upon the inner workings. Budget decision, general policies and curriculum directives are a few examples that come to mind. Memos, letters and bulletins make additions to the "purple flood." Some are open to interpretation, others are for implementation only.

Social contracts, pressure groups and rumor mills do exert considerable informal influences upon what can and will be discussed or attempted within an organization.

WHAT TO OBSERVE IN A GROUP

One way to learn is to observe and analyze what is happening in one's group. All of us have spent our lives in groups of various sorts--the family, gang, team, work group, etc., but rarely have we taken the time to stop and observe what was going on in the group, or why the members were behaving the way they were. One of our main goals here is to become better observers and better participants.

But what do we look for? What is there to see in a group?

I. Content vs. Process

When we observe what the group is talking about, we are focusing on the content. When we try to observe how the group is handling its communication, i.e., who talks how much or who talks to whom, we are focusing on group process.

Most topics about the back-home situation emphasize the content--"what is good leadership," "how can I motivate my subordinate," "how can we make meetings more effective," and concern issues which are "there and then" in the sense of being abstract, future or past oriented and not involving us directly. In focusing on group process, we are looking at what our group is doing in the "here and now," how it is working in the sense of its present procedures and organization.

In fact, the content of the conversation is often the best clue as to what process issue may be on people's minds, when they find it difficult to confront the issue directly. For example:

Content	Process
1. Talking about problems of authority back home may mean.....	that there is a leadership struggle going on in the T Group
2. Talking about how bad group meetings usually are at the plant may mean.....	that members are dissatisfied with the performance of their own T Group
3. Talking about staff men who don't really help anybody may mean...	dissatisfaction with the trainer's role in the group.

At a simpler level looking at process really means to focus on what is going on in the group and trying to understand it in terms of other things that have gone on in the group.

II. Communication

One of the easiest aspects of group process to observe is the pattern of communication:

1. Who talks? For how long? How often?

2. Who do people look at when they talk?

   a. Single others, possible potential supporters
   b. Scanning the group
   c. No one.

3. Who talks after whom, or who interrupts whom?

4. What style of communication is used (assertions, questions, tone of voice, gestures, etc.)?

The kinds of observations we make give us clues to other important things which may be going on in the group such as who leads whom or who influences whom.

III. Decision-Making Procedures

Whether we are aware of it or not, groups are making decisions all the time, some of them consciously and in reference to the major tasks at hand, some of them without much awareness and in reference to group procedures or standards of operation. It is important to observe how decisions are made in a group in order to assess the appropriateness of the decisions to the matter being decided on, and in order to assess whether the consequences of given methods are really what the group members bargained for.

Group decisions are notoriously hard to undo. When someone says, "Well, we decided to do it, didn't we?" any budding opposition is quickly immobilized. We can only undo the decision of we reconstruct it and understand how we made it and test whether this method was appropriate or not.

Some methods by which groups make decisions:

1. The Plop: "I think we should introduce ourselves".... silence

2. The Self-Authorized Agenda: "I think we should introduce ourselves, my name is Joe Smith....."

3. The Handclasp: "I wonder if it would be helpful if we introduced ourselves?" "I think it would, my name is Pete Jones....."

4. "Does anyone object?" or "we all agree."

5. Majority-Minority voting.

6. Polling: "Let's see where everyone stands, what do you think?"

7. Consensus Testing: Genuine exploration to test for opposition and to determine whether opposition feels strongly enough not to be willing to implement decision; not necessarily unanimity, but essential agreement by all.

IV. Task - Maintenance - Self-oriented behavior

Behavior in the group can be viewed from the point of view of what its purpose or function seems to be. When a member says something, is he primarily trying to get the group task accomplished (task), or is he trying to improve or patch up some relationships among members (maintenance), or is he primarily meeting some personal need or goal without regard to the group's problems (self-oriented)?

As the group grows and member needs become integrated with group goals, there will be less self-oriented behavior and more task or maintenance behavior. What kinds of categories can we identify?

Types of behavior relevant to the group's fulfillment of its task:

1. Initiating: Proposing tasks or goals; defining a group problem; suggesting a procedure or ideas for solving a problem...

2. Seeking information or opinions: Requesting facts; seeking relevant information about group concern...Asking for expressions of feeling; requesting a statement or estimate; soliciting expressions of value; seeking suggestions and ideas...

3. Giving information or opinion: Offering facts; providing relevant information about group concern...
Stating a belief about a matter before the group; giving suggestions and ideas.

4. Clarifying and Elaborating: Interpreting ideas or suggestions; clearing up confusions; defining terms; indicating alternatives and issues before the group...

5. Summarizing: Pulling together related ideas; restating suggestions after the group has discussed them; offering a decision or conclusion for the group to accept or reject...

6. Consensus Testing: Asking to see if group is nearing a decision; sending up trial balloon to test a possible conclusion...

Types of behavior relevant to the group's remaining in good working order, having a good climate for task work, and good relationships which permit maximum use of member resources, i.e., group maintenance:

1. Harmonizing: Attempting to reconcile disagreements; reducing tension; getting people to explore differences...

2. Gate Keeping: Helping to keep communication channels open; facilitating the participation of others; suggesting procedures that permit sharing remarks.

3. Encouraging: Being friendly, warm, and responsive to others; indicating by facial expression or remark the acceptance of others' contributions...

4. Compromising: When own idea or status is involved in a conflict, offering a compromise which yields status; admitting error; modifying in interest of group cohesion or growth...

5. Standard Setting and Testing: Testing whether group is satisfied with its procedures or suggesting procedures, pointing out explicit or implicit norms which have been set to make them available for testing...

Every group needs both kinds of behavior and needs to work out an adequate balance of task and maintenance activities.

Emotional Issues; Causes of Self-Oriented Emotional Behavior

The processes described so far deal with the group's attempts to work, to solve problems of task and maintenance, but there are many forces active in groups which disturb work, which represent a kind of emotional underworld or undercurrent in the stream of group life. These underlying emotional issues produce a variety of emotional behaviors which interfere with or are destructive of effective group functioning. They cannot be ignored or wished away, however. Rather, they must be recognized, their causes must be understood, and as the group develops, conditions must be created which permit these same emotional energies to be channeled in the direction of group effort.

What are these issues or basic causes?

1. The problem of identity: Who am I in this group? Where do I fit in? What kind of behavior is acceptable here?

2. The problem of goals and needs: What do I want from the group? Can the group goals be made consistent with my goals? What have I to offer to the group?

3. The problem of power, control and influence: Who will control what we do? How much power and influence do I have?

4. The problem of intimacy: How close will we get to each other? How personal? How much can we trust each other and how can we achieve a greater level of trust?

What kinds of behaviors are produced in response to these problems?

1. Dependency-counterdependency: Leaning on or resisting anyone in the group who represents authority, especially the trainer.

2. Fighting and Controlling: Asserting personal dominance, attempting to get own way regardless of others.

3. Withdrawing: Trying to remove the sources of uncomfortable feelings by psychologically leaving the group.

4. Pairing up: Seeking out one or two supporters and forming a kind of emotional sub-group in which the members protect and support each other.

These are not the only kinds of things which can be observed in a group. What is important to observe all vary with what the group is doing, the needs of the observer and his purposes, and many other factors. The main point, however, is that improving our skills in observing what is going on in the group will provide us with important data for understanding groups and increasing our effectiveness within them.

BION'S CATEGORIES

For Describing Group Behavior

INQUIRY MODE: Task-oriented behavior. Group-oriented responses aimed at helping accomplish group objectives. A problem-solving orientation. Attempting to understand and deal with issues. Making suggestions for analyzing and for dealing with a problem.

FIGHT MODE: An angry response.

Facilitates group inquiry mode: insistence that an issue be forced into the open and faced, to get disagreement and conflict expressed and dealt with, to prevent flight from the problem.

Obstructs group inquiry mode: attacking and deprecating group or specific member. Self-aggrandizement at expense of others. Projected hostility.

PAIRING MODE: Supporting another person's idea. Expressing intimacy, warmth, supportiveness to another member. Expressions of warmth and commitment directed to whole group.

Facilitates group inquiry mode: when it builds a non-threatening, encouraging supportive climate that enables persons to be free and open.

Obstructs group inquiry mode: when it builds cliques and subgroups which become antagonistic, when it obligates others so they feel compelled to comply or agree rather than free to resist, when it smooths over and denies conflicts and difficulties that might threaten the warmth and friendliness in the group.

DEPENDENCY MODE: Appeals for support and direction. Reliance on a definite structure, rules and regulations. Reliance on leader or on outside authority. Expressions of weakness or inadequacy.

Facilitates group inquiry mode: when it is temporary to allow group or member to learn how to do for self. When it is realistic because group or member will never need to do for self what he relies on other to do for him.

Obstructs group inquiry mode: when it is unrealistic and thus prevents group or member to do for self. When it is to avoid taking a risk or facing uncomfortable feelings.

FLIGHT MODE: Tuning out - withdrawal or lessened involvement. Joking. Fantasy - daydreaming. Inappropriate theorizing...overintellectualized, overgeneralized statements. Total irrelevancy. Changing the subject. Leaving the group. Excess activity in busy-work.

Facilitates group inquiry mode: when it is temporary to gain perspective or rest with definite intention to return to the problem.

Obstructs group inquiry mode: when it is to avoid problem with no intention of returning to it.

Thus, fight, pairing, dependency, and flight may occur in the service of getting work done (i.e., combined with the Inquiry Mode), or they may occur as a way of avoiding getting work done.

64

SETTING GOALS FOR IMPROVEMENT

This is the last session on interpersonal communications. You may or may not continue to work at improving your ability to communicate following this session. People don't usually continue to work at improving after a workshop! People tend to forget what they have learned. The skills they remember tend to be used less as time passes. This session is concerned with whether these tendencies will be true for you.

You won't be likely to improve unless you have clear ideas about what can be improved in your communication abilities. Review specific techniques presented in previous sessions. These techniques are to help you see yourself. You can use them to see what you know and can do now in the area of interpersonal communications. They also help you see clear goals for improvement that you might wish to set for yourself at any given time. Being aware of a discrepancy between where you are now and a specific goal for improvement can be a motivating force in you. Vague awareness that, "I could be better," is not apt to move you toward taking action to improve. Awareness of a discrepancy with a clear, specific goal is apt to move you. It can be important, therefore, to take time alone occasionally to think about, "Where I am now." and "What would be a specific improvement goal I could be working on?"

Me Now ——————→——————→—————— Specific Improvement Goal

It's not easy to spell out a clear, specific picture of communication skills that you can set as improvement goals. Some educators are labeling such goals "behavioral objectives." A goal is stated clearly when I know, "What it looks like when it is happening." Stating that, "I want to be a better listener," is not clear and specific. I don't know what I would see when you are being "a better listener." The following statement is better.

> "I want to include paraphrasing when I talk with Jack at our curriculum study committee meetings. We have frequently found we did not understand each other in the past. I will be satisfied with my improvement when Jack tells me that my paraphrasing attempts were correct four times out of five."

This statement is specific because it focuses on one kind of communications act--paraphrasing--rather than a vague label--a better listener. It is clear because it states <u>who</u> is involved, "Jack and I, <u>when</u>," at our curriculum study committee meetings," and <u>what</u> the criteria is for having reached the goal, "when Jack tells me that my paraphrasing attempts were correct four times out of five."

Try writing an improvement goal that you would really like to work toward and would like to talk about with your trio members. The guidelines to strive for are:

1. Focus on <u>one kind</u> of communication act
2. State <u>who</u> is involved
3. State <u>when</u> it is to be reached
4. State <u>what the criteria is</u> for having reached the goal

An improvement goal concerning my communication abilities that I would like to work toward is:

DEVELOPING SUPPORT FOR CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Developing Support In Yourself And From Others

The most important resource for supporting you as a continuous learner is yourself. Earlier sessions focused on problems such as the difference that typically occurs between one's intentions and one's behavior. Most of us need to find ways of coping with ourselves. Our knowledge, past experiences and desires are major resources within us. However, forces may exist which block us from these internal resources such as lack of time to sit alone and think. Sometimes it can be helpful to try writing down the forces in yourself which can help you move toward an improvement goal and those which work against movement. Such an exercise can result in new ideas about how to support yourself.

Past sessions have provided a variety of experiences in ways that others can help you improve your communication skills. However, these experiences were part of a workshop type of training. In order to be a continuous learner, you will need to seek out and develop helping relationships on your own. There may be forces in you, in others, and in your work setting that hinder or facilitate building relationships with others for getting help in learning. A force against, for example, would be failing to be specific about your improvement goal when asking for help from another. A force for would be remembering to give feedback to your helper about which of his efforts were helpful and which were not.

Take a few minutes to write out some of the forces in you, the strengths and weaknesses of the ways you relate to others that determine your ability to receive help. Working with people you have come to know in this workshop, plan some ways to work at developing similar supportive relationships with others in your "back-home" work setting.

POWER AND INFLUENCE

In these days of less structured organizations in which more group participation has replaced autocratic control to a large extent, what kind of power does the leader/manager wield? Or does one have any? If the manager is more a team leader, a facilitator of group participation than an authoritarian figure, what kind of authority does one have?

According to French and Raven (1959) there are five categories of the bases of power or influence. The first of these is expert power. If we think someone is extremely knowledgeable, if one is an expert in a field, we tend to think of that person as an authority, or one who possesses expert power.

The second power-base is referent power. When someone possesses attractive characteristics that we value (strength, good looks, friendliness, etc.) we tend to identify with that person. We say he/she has charisma; we could also say that he/she has referent power. Legitimate power stems from values we have toward someone's right to influence. For example, we usually consider a policeman to have power simply because he is a policeman. Although we usually don't credit him with expert power or referent, we agree that he has legitimate power.

The final two bases of power, reward power and coercive power, are closely interrelated. If we think a person has the right to reward us, that person has reward power; if we think one has the right to punish us, that person has coercive power.

Managers traditionally have had the latter three bases of power; some successfully influential leaders have developed referent or expert bases of power with their staffs. The question becomes, then, how to develop referent and expert power with others, since research shows these bases are the most effective for exerting interpersonal influence.

Changes in organizational policies (i. e. union requirements) have diminished the extent to which managers possess the reward and coercive bases of power. This leaves the manager with legitimate power which also has been lessened. It used to be that "management" was a title that commanded respect. There was prestige connected with the title, and a manager was an influential and respected personage in a community.

Today, however, the manager's status is greatly reduced and is no longer automatically an honored member of the community. In many organizations, potential leaders are looked down on by their fellow workers. The legitimate power of management has been diminished by the change of society's values.

Individual staff members who have power with their peers usually possess either expert or referent power or both. The leader who is not in conflict with the influential staff members usually has an easier time influencing the whole group than the leader who is at odds with these individuals.

Because quite often the power of the leaders is based on their being identification figures with their peers (referent power) as opposed to the manager's legitimate power (which is on a lower plane of effectiveness), the individuals may have more influence over their peer group than the managers. In such situations, managers cannot influence others simply on the strength of their legitimate and coercive power bases. One way to develop referent power is to communicate openly and share decision making with staff members.

The manager's delegation of part of his power to his staff will not detract from one's own influence. Instead, it will add to it, for this will gain another dimension of referent power. The manager will find that his influence has grown, since the basis for interpersonal communication has expanded from authoritarian legitimate power to an identificative closeness with his staff. The power in the group will have been shared, yet strengthened.

Pam Cutting
Revised
1/28/74

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT PEOPLE

Theory X

The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if he can.

Because of this dislike of work, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, threatened with punishment to get them to make an effort.

The average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, wants security above all.

Theory Y

The average human being learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept but also to seek responsibility, and will exercise self-direction and self-control in achieving objectives to which he is committed.

People have the capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in the solution of organizational objectives.

The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play and rest.

From McGregor, D. The Human Side of Enterprise.

THE HELPING RELATIONSHIP AND INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

Don Murray

Helping others who have problems or needs can be a very rewarding and satisfying experience for all, if successful. However, if helping efforts are handled improperly, they can create havoc and produce detrimental results that are even worse than the original state of affairs. Helping another person who has a problem is not easy. For most individuals it is hard to admit our difficulties to ourselves: it is even harder to share them with someone else. Helping efforts, whether successful or unsuccessful, imply some change or movement in the situation that may generate both good and bad feelings among the individuals affected. So, a word of caution -- <u>be careful</u> when you endeavor to help others.

1. Help must be solicited, not imposed.

The person you are trying to help must be ready to acknowledge that he has a problem and that he wants help with it. If the client and the helper are brought together by a third party, help cannot be given or received unless the client permits the process to go on.

2. How many persons should be present in helping roles at a given time or situation will vary greatly with the nature of the problem(s), the number of persons seeking help, and many other factors. When dealing with cases of a highly technical or emotionally laden nature, it is frequently recommended that two persons offer their consulting services to the one who is seeking help.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to using two (or more) rather than one helper. Two minds working together in concert on a problem

usually can come up with more and better questions; together they possess more experience and knowledge to draw upon. With more than one helper hearing the shared problem or situation they then can later compare notes and perceptions, check out the accuracy of collected facts, their sequence of occurrence, their validity, implied meanings, degree of significance, importance, etc.

Working against these advantages are some drawbacks that must be recognized. The client may have expected one person; now he has two with whom he must contend. Bridges of trust must be built between the client and the outside helpers before the work of dealing with his problems or concerns can even begin. If there are more helpers or outside consultants than there are clients, the client may feel outnumbered, overwhelmed, and even threatened by numbers.

3. Before constructive work can begin on the problem(s) or concerns the helpers must endeavor to put the client at ease.

The place where the interview is to take place is important. He may not want fellow faculty members to see him consulting with others. The faculty lounge may be too public. The office or a counselor's room may be threatening. He may want the security of a "safe" room with which he is familiar, such as his own classroom. It may be necessary to agree upon some appropriate place outside the school building where the meeting can take place. The place should offer privacy with little or no chance of interruption. It should be of a comfortable size and appearance.

The helpers must model desired behavior; they should appear to be at ease and comfortable with the situation. If at first the client appears to be evasive or noncommunicative, don't try to stampede him into action.

If the helpers exhibit nervousness or impatience, the interview is probably destined for failure.

4. The early conversation may cover a number of unimportant extraneous topics having no bearing upon the problem under consideration. The client may be testing you (the helpers). He wants to see how you are going to deal with him. A level of trust must be developed. He may present one or two "test" problems just to see how you receive and treat them before sharing his "real" problem.

5. Generally speaking, there are no short, sweet, simple problems. Most are complex and complicated and in order to receive and retain all pertinent information, it may be necessary to take down written notes. Note-taking, in the initial meeting, is frequently very threatening to the client. He's not too sure about you and whether he can really trust you with his problem. If he appears disturbed, stop for a few moments and discuss this problem. Cover the need to keep notes on the many facets of the case, the sequence of events, etc. Assure the client that all information shared will be treated as confidential. After this discussion, if the client still appears to be distracted by the note-taking, quit taking notes.

6. The goal of the helpers should be to assist the client in seeing his problem more clearly and in choosing ways of coping with the problem that are both acceptable and possible for him.

Real help involves a great deal of meaningful listening and very little telling or talking on the part of the helpers. The helpers should avoid being too reassuring; they should not over-praise or play down client responsibilities. The task is to recognize, identify, define and jointly

explore the problem in hopes that realistic possibilities of action are found for the client. Whenever "touchy" points are located that are difficult for the client to talk about, the helpers should strive to find other approaches to these delicate areas and not let the client avoid them.

A frequent problem for outside consultants or helpers is the one of their seeing themselves as not being helpful to the client. They feel a responsibility or obligation to do something or say something directive or to recommend a course of action. This may be the most unhelpful action at the moment -- maybe even a disservice to the individual(s) and his organization.

Perhaps the most valuable service one provides as an outside consultant is merely being there and listening to the client attempt to describe the current organizational problem(s) confronting him. All too often, this is the first time that individual has gathered together all the facts and information known to him, organized them into some logical sequence of events, and in so doing he himself begins to gain new insights into the problem. Thus, you have helped him, even though you may feel you have not.

7. Don't trap yourself (as a helper) by talking or telling too early when you should be listening and gathering facts. As stated earlier, most problems are complex and complicated and may be likened to icebergs. After initial description, they usually are only about one-ninths exposed. As questions are asked and other individuals involved are consulted, the problem may take on different meanings, complexions, etc. Every problem situation usually has several sides; all must be considered when seeking good solutions.

Too often before all the facts are known, promises are made early in a case that can't later be delivered or honored. Words like "They can't do that . . ." or "We'll put a stop to that nonsense . . ." often have to be "eaten" when additional facts become known and the rights and responsibilities are carefully explored and examined.

8. The client can and should expect to be fully apprised of the rights granted all educators in laws, codes and policies as well as suggestions of individuals, agencies or organizations that have services to offer. Too, he should be informed of the proper administrative, ethical, legal and professional channels to follow during the process of overcoming his problem.

There are things that can be done in addition to listening. You may report the success stories of other individuals or groups in similar situations. You can provide names, addresses, phone numbers, etc. of individuals, groups, agencies, etc. who have resources or expertise that would be of possible help. Reports, research studies, publications, etc. known by the helpers could be recommended for reading and consideration. The main points to remember in a truly successful helping relationship are to: (1) Leave the client with an accurate perception of his problem(s); (2) Leave him with several alternatives of action; and (3) Let him or his organization decide which action steps will be taken and what will be done. Leave him with his own self-respect, his own self-reliance and confidence.

BLOCKING AND FACILITATING COMMUNICATION

Perhaps the major barrier that stands in the way of mutual interpersonal communications is the natural tendency to pass judgment on what another person has to say. For example, when someone hears a speech, watches a television documentary or reads a report, his initial reaction is one of approval or disapproval. He evaluates what he has heard/seen/read from his own frame of reference.

Or take another example. Suppose a devout Democrat vehemently declares that because of the Watergate scandal, the 1972 elections should be considered null and void and a special mid-term election should be held. The usual initial response is evaluative. His listeners will agree or disagree or will make some judgment about the speaker, such as "He must be one of those liberals!" or "Sound thinking, Jones".

This brings us to another obstruction of communication -- the tendency to evaluate and judge what is being said is heightened in situations where emotions are involved. The stronger the emotions, the less likely it is that there will be a mutual element of communication. There will be two very separate ideas, two feelings missing each other in psychological space. It is not unlike two semi-deaf persons trying to carry on a conversation. Each, unable to hear the other, responds to what <u>he</u> would have said in reply to his own question. Conversation ended, they go their separate ways, each satisfied and impressed with the other's amazingly similar opinions. In reality, two conversations were held; each person talking to himself. Slightly modify this situation and imagine a conversation between a teenage girl and her conservative father discussing curfew. The lack of communication

is equal. Both the girl and her father speak from her/his own frame of reference. They really aren't talking about the same thing at all. This is not communication. The emotional reaction is the most effective block to interpersonal communication.

The solution? The battering ram to crack the barrier? Step into the other Indian's moccasins and stroll around his frame of reference. When Tom can sidestep the evaluation temptation and listen with understanding, when he can see the situation from the other person's point of view, when he can sense how it feels to Charlie, then communication is successful.

Sounds simple, doesn't it? But this "simple" matter of communication has been found extremely effective in the field of psychotherapy. It is the most effective way of altering the basic personality structure of someone to improve his relationships and communication with others. If someone can really listen to another person, really understand his personal reaction, sense the emotional flavor it has for him, then he will also cause improvement in that relationship. If he can understand the person's fears and hatreds, this will be the greatest help in altering those feelings and establishing realistic and harmonious relationships with those situations. Such empathic understanding -- understanding <u>with</u> a person, not <u>about</u> him -- is such an effective approach that it can strengthen most relationships.

But what if Tom <u>does</u> listen to Charlie, but Charlie remains the same? Probably Tom's listening has not been of the type described above. Suppose that every time Tom and Charlie had a discussion they tried this: Each person can speak his piece only after he has restated the ideas and feelings of the previous speaker accurately -- to that speaker's satisfaction. Before Tom could state his point of view, he'd <u>have</u> to achieve Charlie's

frame of reference to be able to summarize his thoughts and feelings. Tom would find his own comments would be drastically changed, the emotion would drain out of the discussion, the differences would lessen.

If this technique works so well with Tom and Charlie, why don't more people try it? Why don't big groups use it?

In the first place, it takes courage, one of the seven deadly virtues with which not too many of us are afflicted. If one really understands another in this way, he runs the risk of being changed, himself. The thought of being changed is one of the most frightening things we face. Listening can seem too dangerous.

The second obstacle -- when emotions are strongest, it is hardest to achieve the frame of reference of the other person or group. But a third person who can listen objectively and with understanding to each person or group can help by clarifying the views and attitudes each holds. When someone realizes he is being understood, the statements become less exaggerated and less defensive. The catalyst of understanding can help the group discern the objective truth/involved in the realtionship. Mutual communication is established and agreement becomes more feasible.

The final obstacle -- this approach works well with small groups and individuals, but to test its effectiveness on a large scale requires additional funds, more research, and creative thinking of a high order.

But suppose a neutral international group were to act as go-between for two large powers. First the leaders of the hostile countries, then the widest possible distribution of all that material to the people of the countries. When someone tells Tom Israeli <u>why</u> Charlie Arab hates him (and vice versa), it is easier for Tom to understand Charlie's feelings than when Charlie stands shaking his fist and throwing rocks.

But before this can be achieved, society needs to accept the findings of social science with the same faith with which it welcomes the verdicts of physical scientists.

Effective communication is not impossible. The influence of a person who is willing to empathize, to understand -- even a third person, providing he can gain a minimum of cooperation from one of the parties -- can act as a catalyst for communication.

The defenses that prevent communication -- the insincerities, the lies, the false fronts -- fade with Indy 500 speed as people realize that the intent is to understand, not judge.

Gradually, then, comes mutual communication, which leads to problem solving, rather than personal attack. With communication, the barriers, the defensive mechanism which prevent understanding are breached, and two people can work things out together without fear of attack, of disapproval or judgment.